

7/10/2009 4:55 PM

From: [happytrailz@inbox.com](mailto:happytrailz@inbox.com)

To: Clare Laufenberg

Subject: Comments on RETI Phase 2A Report

We're coming down to the wire and my homework's due. I own property in Wonder Valley, CA, near Twentynine Palms, and hope to retire to this land within the next ten years. I am greatly concerned about the RETI projects, not only on my own behalf, but especially because I fear the "accelerated" and unprecedented approach being used is socially irresponsible, foolhardy, and prone to doing permanent harm to the Mojave, and other areas of California grotesquely misrepresented both by President Obama and Governor Schwarzenegger as "vacant" land.

At this point, I have many more questions than comments, and this is by no means a complete list.

### RETI In General

1) Why haven't residents in or near areas being considered for development been contacted, either directly as owners of title in the areas, or through local newspapers or records and other local media? I first heard about the unusual, unprecedented processes involved, and the extraordinarily unusual speed of this "planning" process about four weeks ago, even though I own property that is quite literally within a stone's throw of some of the proxy areas identified.

2) Definitions of "resource quality" are extraordinarily subjective and general, and include no mention of the impact on quality of life for residents and business owners in these areas.

3) Definitions of "resource quality" are not sufficiently defined to be useful, and so far are limited solely to areas' suitability for energy development. Traffic patterns, existing energy transmission capacity, alternatives for development in areas that are not as "dramatic" as "paving the Mojave with solar cells," impacts on water use, impacts on agriculture, impacts on wildlife, impacts on local quality of life are not part of the equation. This is likely because this project is sidestepping the usual environmental impact studies and public input established both by Federal and State legislation, and legal precedent. Are the "plans" being considered now ever going to be subject to standard Environmental Impact Reporting, including requirements for public notification and comment?

4) Spending this much time and money on "planning" that may go nowhere may make for photo ops for politicians, but, since the public has not yet been involved (other than the Sierra Club), the vast majority of these "plans" will never see the light of day, and those that do move into development will likely be tied up for over a decade in court battles (that could have been avoided by complying with existing law instead of attempting to "expedite" the process.) President Obama can "demand" that the existing law and the will of the people be ignored, but We the People are under no obligation to obey him in this regard. By demanding an "expedited" process, Obama has guaranteed that this process will take longer and cost more, and result in far less reasonable, prudent energy development than if existing laws and procedures had been

observed. My question: why has no one involved in RETI told the Governor and the President that they're wasting time and money attempting to steamroll through this process?

5) There is a strange bias toward large-scale projects in all aspects of this report. While a large scale project would fulfill the unspoken political requirement that any plans must include a sexy photo op (i.e. Schwarzenegger's field of solar cells) and offers the most potential for a handful of individuals to realize massive profits, there is no evidence presented that this is the best way to go. Before destroying the Mojave, why aren't smaller-scale projects within urban and suburban areas being considered? These areas are already dedicated as man-made environments, and already have existing transportation, transmission and water infrastructure. Before destroying the Mojave, why not work to put a set of solar panels on every roof in California? Why not work to develop energy sufficiency at the level of the township, or even the neighborhood? Why not consider co-operative, community-owned facilities? Last time I checked, the desert wasn't the only place the sun shines, and venture capitalists were not the only people who could build renewable energy facilities.

6) While the land-use plans for the western Mojave may be long "abandoned", those subdivisions have not, and thank God for that. Private land and business ownership exists throughout this area. That these areas of private ownership are checkerboarded with BLM lands does not mean that the concerns of private citizens in these areas may be ignored. Despite misrepresentations by both Schwarzenegger and Obama of the Mojave as one big slab devoid of life (they've done everything but call it "asphalt"), obviously this is not the case. And, ironically, happily, it is those remnants of homesteads and scattered businesses that may help now to preserve the Mojave's wildlife, vistas, and open space.

7) Why aren't Arizona and Mexico being involved, as Out-of-State Resources? Any act that affects the Mojave affects water use, transportation, wildlife migration, and even weather patterns throughout the West. Certainly, any major energy project in the Mojave, especially involving heavy water use, would in particular impact the Colorado River watershed; Arizona and Mexico need to also be involved.

8) Benefit-cost analyses must extend further than merely 50 years. We need to be talking in terms of generations, not a handful of decades.

To be continued...

Thank you for your time.

Kell Brigan (Ms.)  
happytrailz@inbox.com